

IN THE CLAIMS

DO NOT ENTER CF

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A sputtering target prepared by the butt joining of metal sheets being made of the same material, wherein an intermetallic compound in a joined portion has an average particle diameter of 60% to 130% of the average particle diameter of the intermetallic compound in a non-joined portion,

wherein the joined portion is produced by friction stir welding and has a structure characteristic of the recrystallization of the material of the joined portion by annealing and substantially without a crystal orientation characteristic of plastic flow due to friction stir welding.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): A sputtering target prepared by the butt joining of metal sheets being made of the same material, wherein the average distance between adjacent intermetallic compound particles in a joined portion is 60% to 130% of the average distance between adjacent intermetallic compound particles in a non-joined portion,

wherein the joined portion is produced by friction stir welding and has a structure characteristic of the recrystallization of the material of the joined portion by annealing and substantially without a crystal orientation characteristic of plastic flow due to friction stir welding.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): A sputtering target prepared by the butt joining of metal sheets being made of the same material, wherein the average of the grain diameter of metallic crystals in a joined portion is 20% to 500% of the average of the grain diameter of metallic crystals in a non-joined portion,